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the newsletter

for the National Women's Martial Arts Federation

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CREDITS

EDITOR: Susan Joiner

COVER GRAPHICS: Kathy Hopwood

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WOMEN WARRIORS

"The Woman Warrior in Art and History" is a slide show of over 60 slides of art work from various periods of history. It now comes with a cassette to be played with the show. (All the presenter has to do is sit there and change the slide on cue -- much easier than reading in the dark!) It is available for rent from Fighting Woman News on a sliding scale basis (minimum rent $50). To order, write:

Fighting Woman News
P.O. Box 1459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

MEMBERSHIP NOTICE!!

The annual NWMAF membership fee ($15) is due on the first of the year. If you have not yet renewed your membership, or would like to join, do so now by filling out the application form in this issue (p.17) and receive membership benefits including discounts on NWMAF events, an exciting and informative newsletter, a membership patch and information packet and connections to other women in the martial arts. If you are a paid member and know someone who has not yet joined, please share this newsletter with her and encourage her to become a part of a growing network of women martial artists.

Janet Aalfs
NWMAF Secretary

MATERIAL AID DRIVE

At Special Training '85 the Nicaragua Support Committee held a very successful material aid drive to help Nicaragua. We plan to do the same this year, focusing on material to help women and children. Please bring one or more of the following to Special Training:

WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Tape
- Gauze
- Bandages
- Speculum
- Non-prescription drugs (not expired)
- Sanitary napkins
- Toothpaste
- Humidifier
- Electrical scalpel

DAYCARE
- New Toys (no batteries)
- Crayons
- Puzzles
- Diapers

OFFICE SUPPLIES

TOOLS

MODERN ARNIS SUMMER CAMPS

Two Arnis summer camps will be offered on the West Coast this year, the first from July 9-12 at Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA, and the second from August 6-9 at UC Santa Cruz in Santa Cruz, CA. Both camps will feature instruction by Professor Remy A. Presas. For information on these camps and other seminars in the San Francisco Bay area, contact:

Ann Killeen
11 Valley Drive
Pittsburg, CA 94565

Professor Presas will also conduct a summer camp on the campus of Michigan State University, in East Lansing, Michigan August 13-16. Professor Presas, Black Belt's 1982 "Instructor of the Year" and the Grandmaster of Modern Arnis, will be offering his Intensive Training for the Basic Instructor Course. Students with previous training will be taught advanced techniques and may test for their Advanced Instructor Certificate. For further information, please contact:

Terry Wareham
Midwest Modern Arnis
P.O. Box 6018
East Lansing, MI 48826

IN THE GOOD OLD SUMMERTIME...

Mountain Meadow FEMINIST SUMMER CAMP FOR GIRLS includes among its curriculum carpentry, music, crafts, self defense, discussions of racism, sexism, "being different", family life and much more. Girls are from varied backgrounds, including many from lesbian and gay homes. No girl turned down for lack of funds. Tax-deductible donations make this program go---staff are all volunteer. For information, write to:

Mountain Meadow Country Experience
6445 Greene Street, Room C-303
Philadelphia, PA 19119

MEA CULPA

In the January issue of the NWMAF newsletter, two selections of poetry, "Black Belt Woman" and "The Empty Chairs", were incorrectly credited as written by Valorie Coleman instead of Valorie Colebrook.

A NOTE FROM THE NORTH

The NWMAF recently received a letter from Sylvia Smith of Women's Self Defense of Ottawa, who wrote:

> I've recently started a women's self defense group here in Ottawa. I am interested in reading promotional information from women's self defense organizations in other cities in order to get new ideas on presenting this organization. If it is possible, could you send me any pamphlet or leaflet your group may produce?

If you can help out, send any sample materials to:

Sylvia Smith
Women's Self Defense of Ottawa
P.O. Box 2230, Station D
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K2P 1A7

MARTIAL ARTS CATALOG

Anyone who paid Robin Robertson for an ad or listing in the Martial Arts Catalog she was producing should contact Joan Byron with the following information: your name and address, the amount you paid, and whether your check cleared the bank. Direct inquiries to:

Joan Byron
301 Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11215
(718) 768-4115

LETTERS

January 22, 1987

Dear Editor,

This letter is in response to the letters and articles which appeared in the January issue of the Newsletter concerning racism. NWMAF, as an organization, I am proud to say, has never ignored the issue of racism. It may be a correct accusation, on the other hand, to say we have not done enough. I was a member of the first NWMAF Steering Committee, and I remember, even then, that we would see the racial composition of Special Trainings (which pre-dated the formal NWMAF organization), and we wondered what we could do to "improve" the racial composition of our organization. Quite early, I am proud to say, we actively pursued recruiting women of color as trainers. Given the feelings expressed in the Newsletter, it is clear that is no longer enough.

I am sorry to have to admit to Brenda Jones that had I gone to the 1986 Woman As Leader Teacher's Conference, I probably would have been one of those many women who would not have attended the Racism workshop. There is no pride in that statement. The statement drafted by the Racism Seminar participants includes the suggestion that Special Training '87 include a general "work-out on racism". I would like to add my vote for that suggestion. I think a well-done general workout would reach many like myself who need, in one way or another, to have our consciousness raised. If the workout is well-done I would not be offended by being confronted by some issues such as these, which--quite honestly--I would probably otherwise avoid. I feel obliged, however, to point out to the general membership that whoever organizes Special Training assumes a huge burden, and a not insignificant financial risk. It is not the organizer's role to design workouts. If no trainer comes forth with a plan for such a workout,it may simply not happen this year.

The NWMAF has always seen itself as a political organization lending support to women in the martial arts as well as fighting sexism in the martial arts. As we grow in numbers and strength, our membership hopefully becomes more diverse. But the issue of the "whiteness" of NWMAF is a long-standing one. The leadership of NWMAF, white women, were struggling with this issue before there were women of color to wave the flag. I believe that the NWMAF honestly and sincerely wants to confront the issue of racism within our organization. We need members to help.

I know that it is quite a while until the next election, but I would like to suggest to any women of color within NWMAF that they seriously consider running for an office on the Steering Committee. Clearly, one or more women of color on the Steering Committee is not an answer in and of itself. But I also believe that there may be input which perhaps is not being received because it in not clear who might listen. I remember how, at the school where I trained, when a woman became a black belt, other women began to vocalize their complaints about a sexist male instructor. The women talked to this woman black belt because they believed she would listen. None of these women complained to the male instructors. Women of color within NWMAF should consider whether they might be able to contribute to reducing racism within the NWMAF by being a member of the Steering Committee and facilitating communication as well as action. It has always been the case that the Steering Committee considers every member an equal participant. Similarly, from my experience as a Steering Committee member, I believe that the general membership should address any suggestions they might have vis-a-vis racism to the Steering Committee. Our Chair, Jaye Spiro, has herself taken an active role in combating sexism wherever she finds it. Letters or telephone calls to her will not fall on a deaf ear. I sincerely believe that the Steering Committe would

like, as much as possible, to reflect the needs, concerns and suggestions of the membership.

Perhaps a "racism" committee (multi-racial, I would hope) should be formed as a first step. I know committees are one way of avoiding action, but I believe that a few interested, energetic members could make a difference. For example, this committee could take it upon itself to find contact people in other groups or organizations whose emphasis includes issues of color and familiarize them with NWMAF. I am sure there are martial artists in those organizations who simply don't know about us. The committee could, perhaps, take it upon itself to plan a racism general workout for a future Special Training--or at least locate someone willing to design such a workout. Also, the committee would solicit input from both inside and outside NWMAF about strategies to combat racism within our organization. I do not know how to tell those members who have not yet become "active" in NWMAF that your voice and energy are important. If your voice is not being heard, it may be because you haven't spoken yet.

I have always thought that it is a measure of the strength of our organization how we deal with diversity and adversity. Clearly, racism is a large issue which has been discussed for a long time and may never be completely solved. The fact that the Newsletter is confronting the issue is good. However, I also think it is important that positive action result from all this talk. I sure hope it does.

Sincerely,

Beverly Harris

January 25, 1987

Dear Editor,

I'm concerned about the devotion of the entire January, '87 issue of the NWMAF newsletter to the subject or racism. I've never personally experienced racism in any dojo (I've attended six, to date). Usually, when truly analyzed, any discrimination I experienced was against me as a woman, not because of my race.

I'm afraid that we may be scattering our efforts in the advancement of women in the martial arts. As women, we are very sympathetic to humanist and social-concern causes. Almost all the active (legwork ranks) of volunteers in these organizations are women. By promoting women, we automatically upgrade all other noble causes. But by diffusing our efforts to these noble causes, we weaken our own furtherment, and ultimately, theirs as well.

There are enough unsolved difficulties already for women entering the martial arts. I've personally experienced the following:

a) sexism in the dojo
b) threat of physical assault (not made to the male students present)
c) condescension/paternalism (don't do knuckle push-ups)
d) male-oriented "boot camp" atmosphere, repulsive to not only me, but the other women students as well
e) movements designed for male bodies only (over-concentration on protecting the groin)
f) unequal facilities for men and women (but women paid the same membership fees!)

It is more than a major challenge to solve these problems nationwide. Let's solve them first before rescuing the world of all its ills.

WHY, almost a century after the Emancipation Proclamation, are women still not granted the E.R.A.? Is it specifically because of our sympathetic tendencies to jump on the bandwagon of every other special interest group's noble causes? Thereby putting our own furtherment on the back burner? WHEN will we get around to standing up for our own rights?

Remember, when women take the martial arts, their newfound skills and self confidence lower their likelihood of becoming crime victims, victims of domestic violence or abuse, or any form of discrimination (yes, including racial!).

Let's stay focused. There are plenty of governmental agencies and non-profit organizations which combat racism. Our purpose is to promote women in the martial arts.

Very Sincerely,
Your Sister Martial Artist,

Aleithia C. Bower

November 20, 1986

Dear NWMAF,

As you plan the NWMAF agenda for the upcoming months, I hope you will consider the issue of how the media affects the public image of women martial artists, and how we might address this concern. For example, I note that most martial arts publications are not advancing our cause: they nearly always use only "he", "his", or "him" when referring to martial artists (especially instructors); they print sexist fiction; and they make amazing generalizations about women who train in the martial arts. Often these things are laughable in their error, and yet these are publications that people unfortunately read and take seriously.

I have been thinking that it's time to acknowledge the influence of the media, and want to suggest two approaches that we might as women martial artists, singly and collectively,commit ourselves to in the next year to help rectify the situation:

1. For the large national publications, we can make a habit of writing to acknowledge and thank them for those articles presenting women in a positive light, or editorials that acknowledge inequality and call for corrective action. Conversely, when a publication prints something sexist or makes a silly generalization, this also needs attention: we can write to voice our concern and offer suggestions for improvement.

2. We can encourage one another to support the "alternative" publications that already exist. One that comes immediately to my mind is Fighting Woman News -- a reliable subscription base could do much to help this periodical survive and grow.

Those are some ideas and I hope they will be of interest to NWMAF. I am sending a similar letter to the Pacific Association for Women Martial Artists, and will be on the alert for other opportunities.

Thank you for your consideration and time. Best wishes for the future.

Respectfully yours,

Jalaine Madura

November 6, 1986

Dear Friends,

While attending the Woman As Leader Teacher's Conference in August of '86, I had the great honor of being awarded my Sandan by Bobbi Snyder, founder and director of Feminist Karate Union of Pittsburgh, and current Treasurer of NWMAF. This award capped an eighteen-month long process that may be relevant to other black belts who are currently "teacherless". I'd like to share a few of the details of that process with you.

First, some background. I began training with a university-affiliated school in 1970, received my black belt in 1974, and left to start my own school in 1976. Philosophical differences with my former teachers were sufficiently pronounced so as to make ongoing contact undesireable. And so I have been "teacherless" since 1976.

I loved teaching and running my own school, even if I occasionally missed the regular access to someone of greater experience and skills who could advise me. I felt that my students and school were developing nicely; and felt comfortable taking complete responsibility for my own ongoing training.

By 1980, a few of my students were ready to prepare for their black belt tests. In order to promote them to first dan, I self-promoted to second. The decision to self-promote was not an easy one, but my options at that time were zip. At the time I felt that self-promotion under the circumstances was justified and reasonable, but resolved that promotion to Sandan would be different.

The years since have been characterized by an end to our isolation; a strengthening of friendships with other practitioners, teachers and schools; and full participation in the community that is NWMAF.

Early in 1985, I began to think about 1) the need to develop procedures and criteria for rank achievement beyond black belt (first dan) for a number of my advanced students; and 2) testing for my third degree. This time I had some resources.

The first step for me was in identifying my own goals -- my requirements of myself for promotion to Sandan. I came up with two major, and a host of minor goals. Having identified these,it was easier to select people with the experience and specific expertise to guide this process. I selected two teachers with long and rich experience in the arts -- Bobbi Snyder and Barbara Niggel. Imagine my delight when both of these women agreed to do this with me. The two of them critiqued my goals and added their own requirements. And then for eighteen months they made themselves available to me to discuss progress, to evaluate ongoing efforts, to guide, to encourage, and to challenge me as I moved toward completion of our goals. I'm grateful to both of these highly skilled teachers for giving me the benefit of their expèrience and insight so unstintingly.

A special and unanticipated thing also happened in this process. Bobbi went far beyond what I had asked of my board members. She became, for this time, my teacher. Her incomparable ability to relate movement to principle and philosophy, and her willingness to share her knowledge, has made of this entire process an especially enlightening and valuable experience for me. Master motivator that she is, she gave what a teacher gives -- a sense of being worth the risk, worth the effort,worth the investment.

This entire experience has been of enormous value to me on many levels. In addition to providing a context for

personal growth and development, it has provided a model for rank achievement beyond first dan that can be incorporated into my school for use with my own advanced students.

I know that other "teacherless" women can do the same thing that Bobbi, Barbara and I did. But I also think that the existence of a more formal testing board within NWMAF would be welcomed by many women in positions similar to mine. Despite the abuses and misuses of the ranking system in the larger world of martial arts, I still believe that it can be an extremely useful mechanism for setting training goals, and for bringing greater intention and direction to our practice. And because promotion beyond the level of first dan is, of necessity, eclectic, the presence of an NWMAF testing board of people from different styles/arts would be more helpful than problematic.

This is not to suggest that establishing such a board would be easy. I'm aware that there would have to be consideration of such things as: criteria for appointment to the board, selection of board members for individual testing committees, general standards of performance, etc.

But I also believe that the leadership of this organization has the integrity and experience to take this on. In its short life, NWMAF has demonstrated a powerful committment to providing opportunities for ongoing growth and development through camps, conferences, trainings and the like. A testing board, established in that same spirit, would provide a valuable service to many NWMAF members.

Sincerely,

Joan Nelson, Movement Arts
Lansing, MI

Water to Wings to Fire

Hey woman
who glides on wood
as if it were water
where'd you learn
to flow like that
you open your arms
and out leap dolphins
you draw them to center
and dive below

Hey woman
who leaves behind
a phosphorescent trail
where'd you learn
to glow like that
fluid as light
in waves you ride
singing onto shore
as if you were the sea
herself
coming home

As if you were the sea
your open face
reflects the sky
a flock of birds
rises in a flash
from salt-washed eyes
where'd you learn
to change like that
from water
to wings
to fire
you burn

Hey woman
where'd you learn
to blaze like that
as if you were the sun
herself
shining down

Janet Aalfs 2/87

NEW BEGINNINGS

This column is for everyone, but will focus on the opportunities, challenges, and problems of the maturing female martial artist. We started off calling ourselves the Aging Committee, but felt New Beginnings was far more appropriate to what we're all about. We can briefly mourn the loss of our youth but to be successful human beings and successful martial artists, we must get on with life and be open to all the new things time and wisdom offer.

When I first began training (at age 40 -- better late than never), I'd wake up each morning wondering if this would be the day when I'd be too old to continue. As time went in, I got stronger, I hurt less, and I felt younger, not older. I finally decided that I'd never be too old. If I couldn't "make ten with five and five, then I'd make ten with six and four." Fortunately, I have a teacher who likes women and wants all this students to succeed.

I've gotten very interested in fitness, nutrition, physiology, and exercise. Information is easier to obtain now, since fitness has become so popular. Here are some interesting facts on the aging process and exercise.

On the down side, in the aging, unexercised body, the cartilage calcifies, skeletal elasticity decreases, muscular strength diminishes 3-5% per decade, the heart's ability to pump blood declines 8% per decade, osteoporosis becomes a threat, and contact sports are not good for you.

On the up side, in the aging body, exercise will halt shrinking of the bones and will even strengthen them and will slow or stop the deterioration of cartilage in the joints; muscles will improve with use; the heart, which is a muscle, will get stronger; and new bone is laid down at points of stress. Exercise seems to delay the aging process, and so martial arts exercises give you the ability to continue doing martial arts exercises.

Do you have any questions or thoughts you'd like to share on how aging affects the body? Please write. Send all correspondence to:

Sandie Morgan, Chair
Route 2, Box 499
Joplin, MO 64804

NOTES FROM THE STEERING COMMITTEE

The NWMAF Steering Committee met in Pittsburgh, PA on Jan. 16-18. Those present were Jaye Spiro, Chair; Bobbi Snyder, Treasurer; Joan Byron, Fundraising Coordinator; Ann Killeen, Events Coordinator; and Janet Aalfs, Secretary.

The Committee reviewed minutes from the last meeting and the audit of last year's budget. A projected budget for 1987 was begun and the Treasurer reported that there are 600 paid members. A report on the Rank/Promotion Committee brought up a suggestion to form a Standards Development Committee.

The report on S.T. '87 included an update on trainer applications, financial aid, and childcare guidelines. Ann Killeen and Crane Willemse are continuing to contact members in order to improve the organization and development of committees.

Other business included discussion about S.T. guideline revisions, feedback for the newsletter and archives, cancellation of the Teacher's Conference, and other topics.

For a complete set of minutes, send a SASE to Janet Aalfs, 29 Fort Street, Northampton, MA 01060.

RACISM WITHIN

Karen Kirchoff

(Editor's Note: In addition to airing different views on the question of whether the NWMAF should award black belt ranks, this edition of the newsletter has also focused on the issue of racism within our organization. When initially considering this issue, I fully agreed with the position expressed by Aleithia C. Bower (see "LETTERS", p. 4), feeling that the NWMAF should address topics that relate more directly to our primary interest -- the martial arts. I still hold that opionion and believe this approach will best enhance our growth as a group. However, the following article on racism, which describes the author's experience in writing the racism statement read at the 1986 Teacher's Conference (see the January, 1987 issue of the newsletter), poses some very provocative questions. Finding the answers to such questions will not only illuminate the institutional nature of racism, but will provide for us as individuals the opportunity for self-discovery and greater understanding, which is the ultimate objective of the martial arts.)

In the silence of the dorm room I sat on my weekend bed into early morning hours with the working draft in my lap and a pen in my hand. The flow of writing came racing upon me -- I felt the images and ideas and words all coming together in clarity and strength as I sat finalizing that statement. It felt very good. What we were doing was very good.

And so I continued on that wave of positive direction confronting racism until an unrelenting disquiet took a grip on me and refused to let go.

Racism hurts people. It crowds out the positive possibility of an individual actualizing her/his fullest self.

We are all brilliant managers of denial. I am no different. I have long ago learned the coping strategy of denying that which is difficult for me to look at in myself, that which is painful, that which I have not yet learned to change, and that which I am not ready to change about myself. But I <u>have</u> learned to recognize the signs in myself when I am not being honest and when I am denying something. It's a growing gnawing, an anxiety that has physical manifestations.

Racism is a living anxiety.

With this creeping discomfort taking greater hold of me, I did what we are all so good at doing: I bent down over my work more determined and focused than ever, with some primitive notion that if I scribbled furiously I would chase away this crowding anxiety. In other words, "if I ignore it, it will go away."

Racism denies ourselves and others.

Confronting racism is about questioning our assumptions. I was beginning to question some of my own. I assumed that <u>I</u> wouldn't read this statement; I would stand there in "support" while someone else from our group read it. I had a lot of "good" reasons for deciding not to read it.

Racism is maintained by a lot of "good" reasons.

My "good" reasons were many, but the more I explained my "good reasons" to myself, the more uncomfortable and questionable they became. "I wasn't ready to be

'out front' in NWMAF yet" really meant that I didn't want to make waves.

Racism is held in place by those who don't want to make waves.

My rational good reasons were becoming more desperate: "I've already been doing my share; I wrote it, someone else could read it" -- really meant I can pick and choose where and when I confront this issue.

Racism is perpetuated by those who have the luxury and privilege to "pick and choose" when and where to confront it. Those who suffer from racist attitudes by others can't pick and choose when or if they deal with racism: they have to live with it every day.

My rational answers and the implications of those answers on a global scale disturbed me more than the anxiety that had forced its way into my psyche. But what I needed to do with this personal discovery about my own connection with institutional racism brought me more anxiety than ever: I needed to read the statement out loud during the closing. I needed to stretch beyond my own privileged self-defined and self-imposed limitations to deal with this issue of racism. It wasn't enough that I went to a seminar; it wasn't enough that I participated in a draft; it wasn't enough that I finalized the draft; and it wasn't enough that I would stand with the group and the individual who would eventually read it; it wasn't enough that I do this in other places in my life. All these things were easily within my repertoire. I had done them all before. But I wasn't challenging anything in myself to do all this; how then could I challenge the system? Challenge others? Challenge NWMAF? This was the time and place where it was not easy, where it was plainly hard to do.

Toppling racism depends on stretching all of ourselves beyond what's comfortable, beyond what's safely familiar and known. It requires what's most difficult for us to do at those times when it's hardest.

So I wasn't surprised at my total dis-ease during the conference closing. I've been in front of groups before -- all from the privilege of choice, all without nervousness. Now I was about to read a statement which stretched me beyond any readiness that I have always had the luxury to develop in my own self-determined time. I didn't like it one bit. I also knew it was the right thing to do.

The questions we should ask ourselves are: How is our white women's notion of self defense not parallel to women of color's? Is our assumption that women need to be taught to be loud, need to be taught to fight based on race? class? Is confrontation training as we know it and teach it founded on whiteness? class? Are confrontation scenarios strictly white culture scenarios? How is our system of payment, our dues, the location of our schools,our ads, our ad locations, our child care arrangements all reflective of race, class? Does mass transit service our school and community locations? What is that vast body of experience and knowledge that is lost to all of us when we remain a color-blind society in the worst sense of the word?

As women martial artists we have within our own selves and in bonding with each other redefined our role as woman in this global society as being other than the status quo. forced upon us: we have been and are making a huge political statement in so doing, whether we define it like that or not. Racism is also a status quo forced upon us and with which we collude, or are made to unwittingly reinforce with what Audre Lorde calls "the tools of the Master's House". It happens with our silence, our convenient "color-blindness", our assumptions. It is as detrimental to us as narrowly defined definitions of "woman".

SHOULD NWMAF AWARD RANK?

Barbara Christensen

(Editor's Note: The issue of whether the NWMAF should award black belt ranks is a topic that is currently being hotly debated within the organization. Here and on the following page are two "opinion" pieces written by members to express their views on the subject.)

If we as a Federation are going to consider the possibility of awarding rank, we should all think very carefully about what the political ramifications within our organization might be. On one hand, the possibility of receiving rank from the NWMAF adds a tremendous amount of depth and professionalism to what we can offer. It increases the options for all members, especially those who have no instructor, or who choose not to participate in a male-dominated (or other) organization. On the other hand, awarding rank could become a platform for the kind of infighting that I feel could ruin the credibility and integrity of our organization.

In 1981, Jaye Spiro and I sponsored a Teacher's Conference in Detroit. One of the big topics at that conference was to formulate a plan for awarding rank for first degree black belt and above. In the workshop, we submitted our ideas for criteria to test for the black belt ranks. As we went over the lists that two instructors had drawn up, I was shocked at how totally different the viewpoints were. One list consisted of objective physical requirements like X number of katas from the student's own style, X number of katas from another style, and X number of weapons techniques. The other list consisted of subjective requirements like focus, balance, endurance, speed, concentration, effectiveness, self defense ability, etc. Obviously, both aspects are necessary and important. But, judging whether or not qualities such as focus and effectiveness are present is in large part a matter of opinion. Factors such as age, teaching ability and knowledge of the art can play a part in the judgement. Who is going to make these kinds of determinations? Are things like dedication to the art, and contribution to the NWMAF going to be factors? What if a person no longer trains on a regular basis but teaches and has been active in organizing and contributing to the growth of women's martial arts? Are qualities like endurance, speed and power no longer considered? And what if someone wants to be considered for rank who has broken away not from a male-dominated organization, but from a female instructor who is also active in the Federation? Is there any way to avoid being used as a means for students and instructors to escape conflicts within their own schools, thereby creating larger conflicts?

All of these problems and more are sure to come up if we begin awarding rank. Are the benefits worth the factionalizing that could take place? So far, we have been basically a support and resource organization that has offered rank indirectly by allowing members to make their own contacts through the organization and pursue promotions through individuals. Should we continue in this manner, or should we actually begin awarding rank in the name of the Federation? Whichever way we decide to go, I would like to see a lot of thought and planning put into it. This is a decision which can really determine the future of the National Women's Martial Arts Federation.

RANK AND CERTIFICATION -- TO GET INVOLVED OR NOT???

Julie Harmon, Ph.D.

Rank as we all know is not an end but merely another milestone along a very difficult path. Milestones are often cause for celebration, acknowledgement; they should be meaningful and contain integrity and pride. I know of many women in situations in which their rank achievements are only farcical celebrations -- where the integrity is lacking and where the true meaning of their accomplishment has been masked behind philosophical statements that contain little applicability to their life. I do not think this is right. We all create out own symbolism, but rank is not just a private accomplishment. It means something to the individual and stands for something in the world of martial arts.

It is not the place for the NWMAF to engage in changing every degree granting school or instructor to fit a more honest model. But neither can every woman train with the more enlightened women instructors. So, what choices do others of us have? What are some alternative ways of being in the martial arts world?

The choices are few. One is to look around for another school where hopefully her ideas will be valued rather than ignored, where she'll be respected instead of patronized. Another choice is for her to structure her own learning, trying to be systematic, fair, open-minded and constantly self-reliant, gaining higher rank by approaching individuals to work with her to organize a process of certification. This option has some advantages; picking one's own committee, orchestrating the process to the best of one's ability and only occasionally wrestling with the question of "who are those people who granted you your rank?"

One more option is one that at this moment is only a possibility. Let the organization, the one that many of such women are proud to be part of, that they pay dues to and support, provide a structure for continued milestone-making. I believe that a committee sanctioned by the NWMAF would be more well-rounded and more difficult and thorough than anything an isolated individual could put together on her own. NWMAF contains in its membership and its leadership martial artists that are CERTAINLY EQUAL to many "Master" instructors that I have known. I feel that if NWMAF were to grant rank, then it would be with the same integrity that it does everything else (which is something that I cannot say about some of the other national martial arts organizations).

It is time for NWMAF to organize in a manner that provides its members some very real and tangible symbols of its existence. The process of empowerment that each woman goes through in her training is individual, but the obligation to the NWMAF is collective. The National organization has the obligation to offer an alternative mechanism for what exists in the martial arts world. No one needs to utilize it, but the choice, and within that choice the opportunity for empowerment, needs to be.

* * * * *

In order to make a proposal to the NWMAF Steering Committee regarding awarding black belt ranks, the Rank/Promotion Committee is gathering information on testing requirements for a variety of styles. If you can send a copy of the requirements for the black belt ranks in your style, it would be very helpful. Please include information such as technical/written requirements, class attendance requirements, etc. Send this or any other pertinent information to: Joan Nelson, 21 Rosamond, Lansing, MI 48912

FIRST AID TIPS FOR THE MARTIAL ARTIST AND ACTIVE WOMAN

Becca Harber

BRUISES: As soon as you are hit or bump into something in a hard way, vigorously rub the injured area with your hand for a minute or so. I do this automatically and have found rubbing prevents a bruise from developing except when hit very hard. When I do notice a bruise, it's almost always in a spot I hadn't noticed I had injured and so,hadn't rubbed.

If I've hit something very hard (this might include feeling pain that continues or a sense of vulnerability in that area), putting ice on that area is an excellent way to prevent or minimize bruising, swelling, and additional pain or sensitivity. For example, I went cross-country skiing in crusty snow that kept trapping my skis, sending me forward so that my knees went through the shallow snow and hit the frozen ground. The impacts were so hard, I was worried about my knee, so I packed some snow into a plastic bag and secured it on top of the knee with a handkerchief under my pants for a half hour or so and stopped skiing on that punishing slope. Afterward there was no sign or feeling of sensitivity, bruising or other injury.

CUTS, SCRAPES & OTHER WOUNDS: A basic soak or poultice that will soothe, heal and disinfect can be made from equal parts comfrey leaves/stalks, rosemary and yarrow tops. Use dried or fresh plants depending on what you have available. Bring water to a boil, let sit two minutes to cool a bit and pour over the herbs in a glass jar, cover and let sit. This soak will be most potent if the herbs steep for a few hours, but for your first soak you can use some after 15 minutes and save the rest for later soaks. The soak should be hot, yet not painfully hot to put your injured part into. One possible proportion is 1/3 ounce of each herb in one quart of water. If you need less, use proportionately less. The quantities aren't that important for this.

Another option is to let the fresh or dried plants soak i the hot water until soft and then place the comfortablly hot leaves on the wounded area. You need only as much of the plants as are needed to cover the injured area. This is called a poultice. The soak and poultice are supposed to have similar benefits, however the soak will initially help clean out the wound, too.

The comfrey and yarrow also stop bleeding. If you have fresh plants, chew or pound the leaves so they're pulpy and place right on the wound. Yarrow is one of the most common plants found in meadows, old fields, seashores and in high elevations/ mountains all over this continent. Great to know for hikes and other outdoor adventures!

Another helpful aid for healing wounds and preventing or dealing with infection is Echinacea root. A supply of the tincture is handy at home, in a vehicle or at the dojo for a variety of needs. For first aid, drops of it are put on the wound or infected area after it's been cleaned; once a day is helpful. Echinacea helps wounds heal from the bottom up, minimizing the possibility of infection. (In contrast, goldenseal root powder is said to catalyze healing from the top down so that a scab may form on top leaving a pocket underneath where infection could occur. For this reason, goldenseal is recommeded for superficial scrapes only.) Ten drops of the tincture in half a cup of water can be taken internally to nourish one's immune system if you have a serious infection. And if you are going in for any kind of surgery, take 10 drops daily for 10 days before surgery to prevent infection later.

Many natural food stores, co-ops, and

herb stores are now selling Echinacea tincture or dried roots. Look for tincture from "Echinecea augustifolia", as "Echinecea purpurea" is supposedly only effective when used fresh. Even better -- it's easy and cheaper to make your own tincture. Select a glass jar according to how much tincture you want (it makes a nice gift, too). Fill it 1/4 with dried augustifolia roots, the rest with 80 proof vodka or other drinkable alcoholic product (i.e. not rubbing alcohol). Seal securely, label with contents and date, and let sit for six weeks. Shake it once a day, since dried plant material settles in a thick layer otherwise and doesn't get extracted as well. A labelled eyedropper bottle (with a glass, not a plastic dropper due to chemical reactions of plastic and alcohol) is handy for dispensing it when needed. Pharmacies often sell these bottles. Your tincture will be good unrefrigerated indefinitely.

Echinacea roots and many other dried herbs can be ordered by the pound from Frontier Cooperative Herbs, Box 299, Norway, Iowa 52318.

BLACK BELT MEANS BEGINNER

Ellen McEvoy

Greg, a salesman in the audio store, was a nice enough guy. After Karen brushed him off so she could shop without him hovering over her, he turned to me.

"You do karate?" he asked, gesturing at the emblems on my jacket. I said yes and answered his questions about my rank and style.

"I used to do Tae Kwon Do," he told me. "I have my black belt." I asked if he trained at the Tae Kwon Do center across the street. He said no, and added, "I did go there once, but frankly, I didn't have anything to learn from them."

At that point, Karen broke in with questions about the stereos. While she made her purchase, I thought about my conversation with Greg.

When I began my karate training, I thought that a black belt would be my ultimate goal, the culmination of my training. I wasn't the only one to feel that way. I was one of the first students in a new dojo; we were all beginners together, and the only black belts we knew were our instructors. Each of us, in our own way, wanted to be like them, and some of us thought that earning a black belt would mean we had arrived.

It was made clear to us that a black belt does indicate an arrival: an arrival at the beginning of true karate training. When you earn your black belt, we were told, you will have shown that you know the basics and are ready to refine your physical performance. You will be ready to learn the meaning of karate. It was made clear, not only through words but also through the example of our instructors (who train diligently at other dojos, at seminars and camps, with each other and on their own) that training and learning do not stop with the attainment of shodan... or nidan... or sandan...

As the months went by, we were also told that the role of sensei (teacher) is limited. Our learning of karate, even in the early stages, must come from within ourselves. An instructor can teach new forms, demonstrate techniques, give correction, and encourage us. She cannot give the will to practice; she cannot give energy, power, or focus; she cannot give the positive attitude that will get us through the difficult times in our training.

When I have earned my black belt, I hope I will remember that I am just beginning. I hope I will seek out those who can teach me more, draw on my own resources to refine my skills, and share what I know with those who are beginning their training.

I hope I will never say, "I got my black belt and stopped. I had nothing else to learn."

REMEMBERING THE PAST WHILE SEEKING THE FUTURE

Sitting here sorting through the NWMAF archives files preparing materials for the S.T. displays, I find myself thinking of schooldays long past and how much I ignored history. Perhaps due to the boredom or not identifying with the history taught in D.C. public schools, I just plainly didn't see any point to studying something contained in yellowing books kept on dusty shelves. It was something one was forced to sit through in school.

Given this background, it is ironic that I'm the archivist for the NWMAF. I organize and maintain files, create public displays to be exhibited at NWMAF events and keep up a constant stream of correspondence, all to record and preserve history. History? Herstory? Ourstory. The key word is story.

As evidenced by the archives displays, our story is one of love, fears, and dreams. A complex and growing story that must not be lost as many of our female ancestors have been. This story is of present day women warriors that will remain long after we have returned to dust. I hope that you will see it, hear it, and experience the story fully at S.T. '87, and that each individual will further the story which is so necessary to our well-being and growth.

Kathy Hopwood

The NWMAF public display will be presented at S.T. '87. The display records the story of NWMAF from the early 1960's to the present. If anyone has additional materials to donate or loan to the archives, see Kathy Hopwood at S.T. '87 or write to:

NWMAF ARCHIVES
P. O. Box 381
Carrboro, NC 27510
(919) 682-7262 (Martial Arts Center)

STEERING COMMITTEE SETS UP SCHOLARSHIP FUND

At the April meeting of the Steering. Committee, a scholarship/outreach fund was established to be used to broaden women's access to the martial arts at all levels. This fund will be dedicated to making martial arts events affordable to women from diverse racial, economic, and cultural backgrounds. We hope to raise $1500 to $2000 per year for this purpose. Application procedures and selection criteria are being drafted and will be adopted at the fall meeting of the Steering Committee.

Offering lifetime memberships in NWMAF was another idea which was presented as a way to help the scholarship fund get started. Many women have asked about life memberships, so the Steering Committee voted to establish them. For $150, you can be assured of an uninterrupted subscription to the newsletter, and freedom from those nagging renewal letters. All lifetime fees will go to the scholarship fund.

If you would like to make a donation to the scholarship fund, or purchase a lifetime membership in NWMAF, send your check or money order, payable to the NWMAF Scholarship Fund, to:

Joan Byron
301 Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11215

TEACHER'S CONFERENCE: GOOD NEWS AND BAD NEWS

O.K., first the bad news. We have been forced to cancel the Teacher's Conference for August of 1987 for several reasons: reserved dates which conflict with other women's events, several trainers who were unavailable to teach,and the inability to secure an alternate date from Hobart-Smith College.

The good news is that we're still very much committed to doing a Teacher's Conference. After careful research, we have decided to try a back-to-back Special Training '88 and Teacher's Conference. We feel that having both events during the same week (Teacher's Conference on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday and Special Training on Friday, Saturday and Sunday) would alleviate some of the time problems people face. In addition, we are negotiating with the College to keep the cost of room and board reasonable and affordable, not only for people attending Special Training or Teacher's Conference separately, but particularly for folks who attend both.

We are in the process of submitting an application for endorsement for such an event to the Steering Committee. We welcome input from anyone who may have thoughts about such an event. Please send your comments to:

Ms. Cassandra George
678 Valley Road
Brooktondale NY 14817

We look forward to hearing from you.

Bobbi Snyder
Cassandra George

MODERN ARNIS: A WEAPONS ART WELL-SUITED TO WOMEN

Last summer sixty women and men gathered at the West Coast Modern Arnis Training Camp to train with Professor Remy A. Presas, the Grandmaster of Modern Arnis. Classes were held from 9 a.m. until 10 p.m., with everyone from novice to black belt learning new techniques and applications.

Many women are training in Modern Arnis because it is a powerful, flowing and practical martial art. Modern Arnis uses many fast-moving, sparring-like drills which are readily learned and enjoyable to practice. These drills train the practitioner to strike and block very quickly, spontaneously, and accurately from any angle or stance. Techniques may be executed with the cane, knife or empty hand. Many of the drills interrelate and may incorporate disarming, jointlocking, and sweeps that make the training very innovative and interesting. It is an art very well-suited to women because timing and feeling the flow of your partner are more important than strength.

Janesa Kruse, third degree black belt in Modern Arnis, states: "Professor Presas is truly amazing. He expands your martial arts vocabulary, especially in the areas of defense against weapons and the use of weapons." Modern Arnis can be incorporated into your own art or it can stand alone as a complete art. If you want more training in practical defense against weapons, Modern Arnis can help you.

(For information on upcoming Modern Arnis camps, see "ANNOUNCEMENTS", page 2.)

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY FOR F.I.S.T.

This year's Feminist International Summer Training (F.I.S.T. '87) is the fifth anniversary -- in celebration of this the camp is called LUSTRA. (In German, Dutch and English "lustrum" means a five-year anniversary; in French one uses the word "lustre".)

The three coordinators of LUSTRA are Jean Repplier, a black belt in shuri-ryu karate with 7 years of experience; Nina Van Roeden, the Dutch Women's Kickboxing Champion who has just begun to study shuri-ryu karate; and Lieke Ruugers, a student in shuri-ryu karate. the goals they have set for LUSTRA are to keep the high quality of teaching and training as well as the relaxed atmosphere for socializing. Special attention will also be given to the international character of the camp: the herstory and the networking. Plans are being made for an exhibit showing the development of the camps.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

WHEN: Friday, July 31 - Sunday, August 9

WHERE: Geerlingshof, Valkenburg, Netherlands

COST: f440/f490/f540 duth guilders (we have been trying and are still trying but there will be less subsidy this year)

For more information, please contact:

LUSTRA
p.b. 11509
NL - 1001 GM Amsterdam
The Netherlands
tel. (020) 27032

NWMAF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____

CITY_____ STATE_____ ZIP_____

PHONE ( ) _____

STYLE_____ YEARS TRAINING/RANK_____

SCHOOL_____ INSTRUCTOR_____

I am interested in the following committees (if more than one choice, please indicate order of preference by numbering):

___ Elections
___ Fundraising
___ Teachers
___ Tournaments
___ Outreach
___ Disabilities
___ Regional
___ Health/Research
___ Promotion Standards Development
___ Clearinghouse/Questionnaire
___ Nicaragua Support
___ History/Archives
___ New Beginnings
___ Self Defense/Rape Prevention
___ Award of Excellence
___ Distribution
___ Publicity/Newsletter
___ Fighting Oppression in Martial Arts Schools
___ Other_____

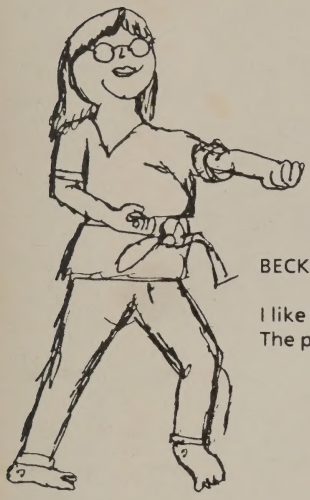
Please complete and return this form, along with a check or money order for $15 (U.S.), $20 (overseas) made out to: NWMAF, c/o Ms. Bobbi Snyder/1724 Sillview Drive/ Pittsburgh, PA 15243.

CHILDREN'S GALLERY

Featuring Artwork
from
Triangle Women's Martial Arts, Carrboro, NC

NAYAHMKA MCGRIFF, 10

I like the kicks and punching. Sometimes it's hard but I like it. I also like the sit-ups and jumping jacks.

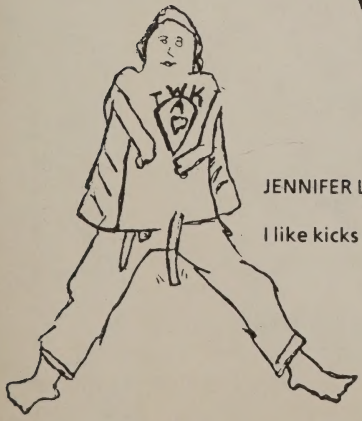


BECKY BRANHAM, 11

I like the good energy I get when I go to class. I like the karate work. The people. I don't like getting frustrated.

JESSE ROBERTS, 6

I like punches and kicks - I like everything - the bows, the stickers and the balloon game. I like it because karate is fun, not boring and not hard.



JENNIFER LOVE, 11

I like kicks and all.

WHITNEY BRANHAM, 11

I like karate OK and it's fun being in it with my sister and I like being with Marsha. I don't like the hard work and hot weather when I'm doing it.

NWMAF NEWSLETTER
c/o Susan Joiner
1804 Piner Road
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

JUNE 11-14: Special Training, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio

JULY 1: Submittal deadline for August issue of newsletter

JULY 9-12: Modern Arnis Summer Camp, Evergreen State College, Olympia, Washington

JULY 31: Submittal deadline for Steering Committee nominations

JULY 31 - AUGUST 9: Feminist International Summer Training (LUSTRA), The Netherlands

AUGUST 6-9: Modern Arnis Summer Camp, UC Santa Cruz, Santa Cruz, California

AUGUST 13-16: Modern Arnis Summer Camp, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE: JULY 1